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# Reagan won't be able to deliver the goods

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Having won the election primarily by focusing voter attention on President Jimmy Carter's "failures" in foreign and economic policy, Ronald Reagan will soon find that he, too, will succeed or fail by the standards he set for Carter.

And only by producing results economically and internationally can the GOP avoid a replay of its 1952 fluke when it took control of Congress only to forfeit its majority two years later.

Reagan faces an extremely difficult task in delivering his much-touted goods in both areas. Quite apart from the essentially intractable problems confronting U.S. capitalism and imperialism, the new administration will be hard-pressed simply to avoid debilitating political splits and ruinous infighting.

Although it is overly simplistic to divide the Reagan camp into "new right" and "establishment" sections, these general lines of demarcation—with considerable blurring—are in fact visible in the Reaganite ranks. In campaigning for his party's nomination, Reagan relied on a base of insurgent, Goldwater-style reactionaries. After the Detroit convention, however, the GOP nominee moved quickly and deftly to build bridges to the traditional Republican segments of the U.S. ruling class.

Now that he has won the prize, Reagan must decide in which direction he will tilt. And since any occupant of the White House is responsible first and foremost to the corporate interests that run the country, it is fairly safe to assume that the new administration will look a lot like its two most recent Republican predecessors, although with a slightly further-right tinge than either Nixon or Ford exhibited.

## SPECULATION OVER CABINET

Speculation about Reagan's cabinet appointments abounds here, but the only sound indication of his political preferences at present is to be found in his "transition team." Since this roster mirrors the GOP presidential campaign operation and also bears marked political similarities to the types of associates Reagan selected as California governor, the transition team will probably foreshadow the cabinet and White House advisory staff.

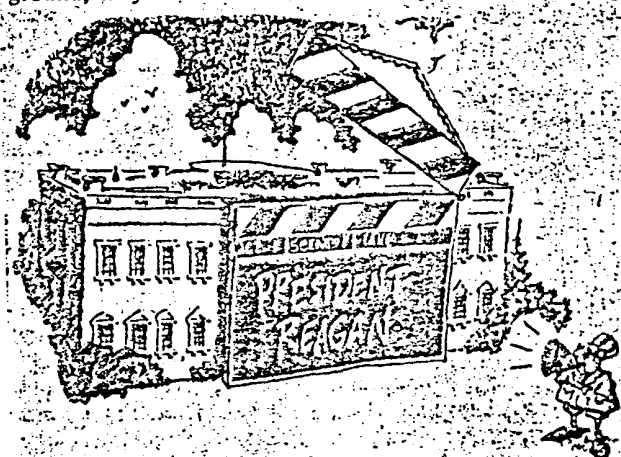
A few "new right" politicians have been given places in the transition operation, but the majority of these temporary appointments have gone to card-carrying members of the more conservative wing of the ruling elite.

Sen. Paul Laxalt (R.-Nev.), former NATO commander Alexander Haig and Hoover Institute hawk Richard Allen are all hard-liners with new-right affiliations. But that description does not apply to such familiar conservatives as former President Gerald Ford, Sen. Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.), former Nixon and Ford foreign policy-maker Henry Kissinger, former Ford cabinet member Donald Rumsfeld, former Nixon economic adviser William Schultz, former Johnson administration member Eugene Roslow, former Ford welfare adviser Caspar Weinberger and perennial establishment lawyer Edward Bennett Williams.

Reagan told Time magazine last week to expect some "surprises" in his cabinet selections—a statement reminiscent of Jimmy Carter's 1976 promise to bring a host of "new faces" to Washington. Reagan's eventual choices are likely to prove just as disappointing to advocates of a "housecleaning."

The President-elect has nothing to gain at this point from alienating his new-right acolytes—a consideration that lies behind his Nov. 5 press conference statement on the Moral Majority that "I won't separate myself from the people who elected us and sent us here." And Reagan will surely try to appease his more reactionary and fundamentalist followers by throwing them at least a couple of cabinet and White House bones.

Such a maneuver would be intended to avoid the kind of acrimonious falling-out that would destroy the new administration's economic and foreign policy aims on their launching pads. Even if these rough-hewn ideas get off the ground, they are bound to disintegrate shortly afterward.



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Economically, Reagan's failure is assured both by the irreversible decline of U.S. capitalism in relation to its Japanese and European competitors and by the inherent folly of the Californian's approach to problems. As a candidate, Reagan made three central promises, all of which were tailored to voters' anxieties and none of which is likely to be completely fulfilled. He vowed to hike Pentagon spending dramatically, slash taxes substantially and simultaneously erase a \$60 billion federal budget deficit.

To simply cite these objectives is to demonstrate their mutually contradictory quality. Not even a magician or a divinely inspired miracle-worker can add \$20 billion to the military, reduce federal revenues by \$30 billion and still come up with \$110 billion in savings—not even if Reagan totally eliminates every single discretionary item in the U.S. budget. Vice-president-elect George Bush correctly characterized these proposals as "voodoo economics" some months ago.

Obviously, Reagan is going to have to choose among these three elements. Since further bloating of the Pentagon's outlays is the only step advocated by both the "new right" and "establishment" wings of his constituency, Reagan can be expected to at least attempt to redeem this particular promise.

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